

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In re U.S. Patent Application of )  
)  
Mark Robert WATKINS *et al.* )  
)  
Application Number: To be Assigned )  
)  
Filed Concurrently Herewith )  
)  
For: UTILIZATION OF UNUSED DISK SPACE ON )  
NETWORKED COMPUTERS )

Honorable Assistant Commissioner  
for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Sir:

Prior to an examination on the merits, please amend the above-captioned application as follows:

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please replace the below claims as follows:

1. (Amended.) A network of computers comprising:  
a plurality of individual computer devices each having a non-volatile data storage device and each having means for communicating with at least one other one of said plurality of computers;  
each said non-volatile data storage device being divided into a first data storage area reserved for use by the corresponding computer device, and a second data storage area reserved for backup storage of data contained in at least one said first data storage area of at least one other said non-volatile data storage device;  
a data protection component for providing data protection for user data stored on each of the non-volatile data storage devices by storing the user data which is resident within the said first data storage area of each non-volatile data storage device, in one or a plurality of said second data storage areas of other said non-volatile data storage devices.

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